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pediency of renewing the charter of the present National Bank has not been brought into discussion. On this question our opinion is decidedly in the affirmative ; and we propose in a future paper to assign the reasons which lead us to that conclusion.

ART. III.—*Address to the Community on the Necessity of legalizing the Study of Anatomy.* By order of the *Massachusetts Medical Society*. Boston. Perkins & Marvin. 1829.

The age in which we live is pre-eminently distinguished by its zeal for the advancement of human knowledge. Every day furnishes new proof of this, in the publications that are sent forth, and the facilities that are devised to promote this great object. Our own country partakes deeply of this spirit, and everywhere throughout our extended regions, vast efforts are making to diffuse the means of education and improvement among all classes of society.

We had hoped, that with the general advance of knowledge, more liberal views would have prevailed in relation to the science of Anatomy ; that this study would no longer be proscribed, nor its students compelled to pursue it in defiance of the law of the land. It is hardly credible, that in our own Commonwealth, which has certainly ever taken a deep interest in the cause of good learning, it should have been thought necessary to endeavor to prevent the practice of dissection. Yet it is true, that within a few years our legislators have passed an act, which inflicts a severe punishment, not only on those who violate the sepulchres of the dead, but also on those, in whose possession any body which has been disinterred may be found, giving the court a power to imprison such persons or fine them ‘not more than one thousand dollars.’ And this law is passed, as if to make the thing more objectionable, at a time when it is well known that heavy damages may be obtained in any court of law from practitioners of medicine in cases of mistake or error arising from ignorance of anatomy. Will it be believed too, that recently, when some attempt was made in our Legislature to mitigate the severity of the law, the proposition was hardly listened to with decency, members seemed anxious to outdo each other in expressions of abhorrence, and the bill was not even allowed a second reading ?

Undignified, to use no harsher term, as these proceedings certainly were, they did much to aid the object they were in-

tended to frustrate. They called the attention of those to the subject, who were best qualified by their pursuits and occupations, to enlighten the public mind. At the first meeting of the Counsellors of the Massachusetts Medical Society after the occurrence in the Legislature above alluded to, it was voted, that a committee be appointed to prepare a petition to the Legislature 'to modify the existing laws which now operate to prohibit the procuring of subjects for anatomical dissection, and to report the same for the consideration of the Society at their annual meeting in June.' This vote was passed in February, 1829.

At the meeting of the Society in June following, which was fully attended by physicians from all parts of the Commonwealth, the committee reported, that though they had prepared a petition in conformity with their instructions, it was not expedient in their opinion to offer it at present; but they recommended that the subject be referred to a large committee, whose object should be to prepare the public mind for the adoption of such measures, as the wants of science and humanity imperiously demanded. In the discussion which took place on this occasion, it was urged on all sides that the time had arrived, when it had become necessary for medical men to speak plainly on the subject, and to throw aside the caution and reserve which they had hitherto maintained in relation to the importance of dissection.

A committee of nine was then unanimously chosen, with directions to report to the Counsellors in October. This committee without delay issued a circular letter to the Fellows of the Society, pointing out the topics on which they intended to urge their views, and asking for any information or suggestions that might aid them in advancing the objects proposed. At the Counsellors' meeting in October, they were requested to continue their attention to the subject, and at the same time were authorized to make expenditures to a certain limited amount. In consequence of this, they published the address, the title of which is prefixed to this article. It was widely circulated in its original form, and having been copied into many of the newspapers of the day, it has gone into almost every family in our community, and has been extensively read. It is unnecessary therefore for us to make any extracts from it. It is a plain, unpretending and judicious appeal to the common sense of its readers, and abounds with facts and statements, within

the comprehension of all, which place in a strong light the necessity of anatomical knowledge. It has made a deep impression on the thinking part of society, and with the other means that have been employed, it has for the time wrought a marvellous change in public opinion.

Shortly after its publication, a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives moved, that the committee on the Judiciary be instructed 'to inquire whether it is expedient to make any further provision by law for protecting the sepulchres of the dead,' and in consequence of this, the committee, in February, 1830, made a very full and satisfactory report; stating the inconveniences under which medical men now labor with respect to the acquisition of anatomical knowledge, its vast importance to society, and the necessity of adopting some measures to legalize dissection. Though no definite plan was recommended, the whole tone of the report was liberal, and showed that a great change in public sentiment must have been produced on this subject within a year.

Some idea of the extent of this change may be formed from the fact, that in the winter of 1829, the proposition to mitigate the severity of the law against those who were engaged in dissection, was driven almost by acclamation from the Legislature; and in June, 1830, the Governor, with an honorable independence that has marked the whole course of his administration, in his message to the two Houses, brought the subject before them in a very forcible manner, and that part of his message was referred to a joint committee of the Senate and House.

A few days after this, the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Medical Society took place, when resolutions were adopted, in which the course taken by the Governor was noticed with great respect, and the Counsellors were instructed 'to adopt such measures as they may deem proper and expedient to accomplish the wishes of the Society.' In consequence of these resolutions, a new committee was appointed by the Council, with full power to act in behalf of the Society, and a further expenditure was authorized, if deemed necessary, to aid the object. And this is the present state of the business.

We have been thus particular in our account of the proceedings that have been adopted in relation to this affair, because we deem them honorable to all parties; highly so to those who have been instrumental in calling the public attention to the

subject, and not less so to the community, who have shown a disposition to examine with impartiality a subject, which is so often viewed with jealousy and distrust. We have taken pleasure too in recounting what has been done, because it augurs so well for the future. It shows how much may be accomplished by the united efforts of a few, when ardently engaged in the promotion of a praiseworthy object, and that the most deeply rooted prejudices will yield, when assailed by no other weapons than those of truth. The change in public sentiment, with regard to dissection, is indeed encouraging, and if similar efforts are perseveringly made, we have a right to hope, that every thing will soon be accomplished, that the friends of science and humanity could wish.

It is conceded now, we believe, on all hands, that a knowledge of anatomy, such as can only be obtained by dissection, is essential to the education of every physician as well as surgeon; we mean every one who hopes to practise his profession with comfort to himself, and with safety and advantage to his patients. To those who are conversant with the subject, it is well known, that more and greater improvements have been made in surgery in the last half century, than in any two centuries that preceded it, and we hazard nothing in saying, that these may all be traced to the minute and thorough acquaintance with anatomy possessed by those who made them. We will for a moment call the attention of our readers to one topic, calculated in our opinion to illustrate our remarks. We allude to the disease known by the name of aneurism. This consists in an enlargement or rupture of one or more of the coats of an artery, which is the name of the vessels, through which the blood is conveyed from the heart to the various parts of the body. A pulsating tumor appears in the course of one of these vessels, producing great disturbance oftentimes in the circulating system, and steadily increasing in size. If nothing be done to remove it, a sudden rupture takes place, and if the vessel be an important one, the patient instantly dies. In former times, when the disease appeared in the extremities, the only certain mode of relief consisted in amputating the limb; but the tumor was often too high up, or it appeared in the neck, or in some other part, where no such operation could be performed. In these cases therefore the miserable victim was left to his fate, anxiously dreading the moment, which he knew must soon arrive and instantly terminate his existence. How

different is the case at the present day ! A patient presents himself to a surgeon with a large, pulsating tumor at the angle of the jaw ; he complains of the great distress which it produces, the vertigo and other affections of the brain, and describes it as increasing daily, perhaps with rapidity, and bringing with its growth an increase of suffering. He is told that he may be relieved, probably cured, by an operation of a very delicate nature, but safe in skilful hands, and attended with but little severe suffering. He submits. An incision is made in the neck, the artery is laid bare below the tumor, a string is passed around it and tightly tied, and the supply of blood being thus cut off from the tumor, its growth is instantly stopped, absorption soon takes place, and a radical cure is effected. Now this operation,—one of the greatest triumphs of modern science,—could never have been devised, and successfully performed, without long, laborious and minute dissection. It was in the first place to be ascertained, how those parts were to be nourished, which were supplied with blood by the vessel that was to be tied ; and having ascertained this, the operator was next to prepare himself for the operation, by repeatedly and carefully dissecting every thing that has any immediate relation with the point on which he was to operate ; for there is but a hair's-breadth between the vessel he wishes to tie and other parts, which if tied or wounded would produce instant death.

It may perhaps be said that we are now acquainted with the fact, that a vessel may be tied without producing the death of the parts which it furnishes with blood, and therefore that there is no further occasion for dissection on this account. This is true, but this fact never could have been ascertained without dissection in the first instance, nor without it can we with safety perform the operation now.

But there are other points of nearly, perhaps quite, equal importance that remain to be ascertained, and which never can be ascertained without actual dissection. We refer particularly to the functions of the nerves and the agents of absorption. The light shed upon the former by the labors of Mr. Charles Bell is in the highest degree encouraging, and it may be confidently hoped that discoveries, not only valuable in physiology, but tending to the alleviation of human suffering, may ere long be made.

We think it unnecessary, however, to press these topics, though we might easily multiply illustrations from the practice

of medicine as well as that of surgery, quite as forcible as the one we have given ; but we deem it superfluous, and shall consider it as admitted, that anatomical knowledge is essential for medical men, and proceed to inquire how they are to be furnished with the means of acquiring this knowledge.

The subject is an embarrassing one, and while we feel it to be our duty to urge the adoption of measures for the removal of the difficulties that stand in the way of dissection, we are at the same time aware, that this should be done with caution and a proper regard to popular prejudice. We have a great respect for the common feeling in relation to the dead ; it is associated with some of the purest and best sentiments of our nature, and we trust that nothing will be done, that is calculated in the least degree to destroy or impair it. But no one will pretend, that the dead can be injured by dissection ; reason and revelation forbid us to suppose it. It is in relation only to the survivors, that the question is to be considered. In any measure, therefore, that may be adopted, care should be taken that these be treated with a sacred regard, nor do we see any thing inconsistent with this, in the plan that has been suggested by the Medical Society.

There is no greater mistake, and none at the same time more common, than that physicians have a particular interest in this question ; and hence it has often been said, that they are bound to set a good example, and direct that their bodies should be dissected after death. In fact, if we may credit the accounts contained in some of the foreign journals, not a few medical men in Dublin have so far yielded to this popular notion, as to agree that this disposition shall be made of their bodies at their decease. But medical men can derive no more advantage from an improved state of anatomical knowledge than the rest of the community ; and, therefore, if it be a hardship, there would be no more reason why they should yield their bodies for dissection than any other individuals. There is, however, a stronger ground than this, and that is, the injury that would be done to the feelings of the living. We presume that there are few, if any physicians, who would object to having their bodies dissected after death ; but they would be unwilling to have it known during their lives that this was to take place, as it might prove a source of great distress to their friends, and if it were not known, no benefit could be derived from the example. The body of no individual should be dis-

sected, when the circumstance would give pain to any survivors. And this is one reason why the bodies of convicts should not, as a thing of course, be yielded up for dissection; many of them have friends, who have already suffered too much during their lives, without having their feelings lacerated at their death. Besides, it is desirable not to attach an odium to dissection, and make it appear as if it were a part of the punishment of the crime of the individual.

We are aware of the difficulty of adopting any course that will meet the wants of science, without coming in collision with the popular feeling. It is a subject of extreme delicacy, and should be approached with caution. Great allowance must be made for the almost instinctive horror which is entertained by nearly every individual in relation to dissection, and every thing should be studiously avoided that is calculated even remotely to increase this horror. Mankind are so excitable on this subject, that they suffer themselves to be governed rather by impulse than reason, and though this is to be lamented, the fact must not be overlooked.

The plan that seems to us to be the most unexceptionable, for there is none to which some objection may not be made, is to grant authority to the municipal officers of the towns and cities of the Commonwealth, to deliver up at their discretion to such regular practitioners of medicine and surgery, as may appear to them to be suitable persons, the bodies of such paupers, as may die and require interment at the public expense. This, however, shall in no instance be done, if any relative shall appear and request that the body may not be given up for dissection, or if any friend come forward and offer to defray the expenses of interment. We are aware that objections are made to this, and it is said, that the inevitable sufferings of the poor are sufficient already, and that we have no right to increase them by providing for the dissection of their bodies at their death; for it is presumed that the idea that this is to take place, would be a cause of great distress to most of them. In reply it may be urged, that in our country few will become so poor as to depend on the public bounty, who do not bring their poverty on themselves by their vices; and that we have as much right to dispose of their bodies at their decease, as we have to determine how they shall be provided for while living; as that, for example, they shall live in buildings of a particular description, be furnished with brown bread instead

of white, and sleep on straw instead of feathers. Besides, it should be considered, that there are not many who are so friendless as to have no one who would appear to prevent the dissection of their bodies, if they should entertain any peculiar horror on the subject; and with regard to those who are so destitute of friends it is better, perhaps, that they should have a little mental suffering, than that the cause of knowledge and the best interests of mankind should be retarded.

We do not believe, however, that if the system proposed shall go into operation, it will be productive of much distress of mind to the inmates of our poor-houses or to the paupers that may be supported out of them. It is obvious that the bodies of all such persons would not be wanted at every season of the year, and for six months at least in each year, the business of dissection must be entirely suspended. No one, therefore, could feel certain that such a disposition was to be made of his body at death, and the very uncertainty would be sufficient to lessen the dread that he might otherwise entertain in relation to it. And in those cases, too, where there was a deep-rooted aversion to this disposition of the body, an application to the municipal authorities would no doubt in every instance be sufficient to prevent it. In France, a system somewhat similar though much more rigorous prevails; there, the bodies of all who die in the hospitals as well as the poor-houses, are sent to the public dissecting-rooms, unless individuals come forward and inter them at their own expense; and yet no inconvenience has been experienced from it in that country; individuals are found as ready to enter the various establishments for the relief of the sick and poor there as elsewhere.

We really think that there is a morbid sensibility on this point that ought not to stand in the way of a great public improvement. There are some who can feel very keenly for those who have a dread of dissection, but have no sympathy for another class of sufferers, who are laboring under diseases of the most agonizing kind, the cure of which can only be accomplished by an improved state of anatomical knowledge.

It is very clear, that if some provision be not made to furnish subjects, violations of the grave will continue to occur, and whenever a single instance of this kind is discovered, as must undoubtedly sometimes be the case, the feelings of the whole community will be more outraged, than they could be under the system proposed in half a century. At present too, the

hazard attending these violations is so great, that only desperate and hardened individuals will engage in the business, and such persons are not very scrupulous as to whose sepulchres they violate ; so that no one, under the existing state of things, can feel certain that the remains of his dearest friend may not be disturbed. So great is the risk in obtaining subjects, that the supply is not equal to the demand, and the price is consequently so exorbitant, as to place them in a great measure beyond the reach of students of moderate means.

This operates very injuriously on the middling classes of society, either by preventing them altogether from educating their children to the profession of medicine, or by putting it out of their power, if they do so educate them, to give them the facilities which are almost indispensable to success. To the rich, this is comparatively of but little importance. Their sons can seek in other states and countries, where a more liberal policy prevails, the opportunities that are denied them at home, and they thus have it in their power to obtain a rank in their profession at the outset of their career, which hardly any thing else can give them. If this system of prohibiting dissection is to be persisted in, no physician or surgeon should be held accountable at law for any error arising from ignorance of anatomy. But we hope for better things. We will not allow ourselves to doubt, that every thing which should be done, will ere long be accomplished. A great change in public sentiment has already taken place, and the great mass of the community will soon understand that they, and they only, will derive benefit from the contemplated measure. We repeat, that the members of the medical profession have no particular interest in it ; if it should be adopted, more will be expected of them, and their labors will be immensely increased without any increase of compensation. It is absurd to suppose that they can have any sinister motive for the efforts they are making ; it is impossible that any thing but a love of science, a desire to advance the cause of humanity, or an honorable ambition for professional renown, could induce them to engage in so loathsome an occupation as that of dissection.

It cannot be too often repeated nor too much insisted on, that it is the great mass of the people who are to be benefitted by giving facilities for acquiring anatomical knowledge, and thus raising the standard of medical education. The rich can command the highest professional attainments wherever they are to be

found; but the man of moderate means must content himself with such as are within his reach. It is obviously for his interest, therefore, that all the professors of the healing art should be skilful and well-instructed; and this cannot be the case under the present system.

Whatever may be the result of the measures now in progress, they cannot fail to be productive of good from the discussion that has been elicited; and the Fellows of the Massachusetts Medical Society will be entitled to the gratitude of the friends of learning, for the active part they have taken in promoting them. It is creditable to them to have led the way in recommending a system, which could not fail at first to be viewed with jealousy and distrust; and it is to their honor that they have not been deterred from pursuing it by the fear of the obloquy and reproach, to which they might subject themselves. They must have known before taking a step in the business, that their motives would be assailed by those who were hostile to the measure they advised; and we respect them the more, because disregarding all narrow and selfish considerations, they were willing to step aside from their ordinary course, and urge upon the community the adoption of a system, which, however excellent it may be in itself, might in the first instance make its advocates obnoxious. Of their ultimate success, we will not allow ourselves to doubt.

ART. IV.—*Clarence. A Tale of Our Own Times.* By the Author of *Redwood*. 2 vols. 12mo. Carey & Lea. Philadelphia. 1830.

This work is perhaps not so finished as *Redwood*, and there is certainly nothing in it which displays so much genius as the character of Aunt Debby in that novel. But we have read it with more interest than any of its predecessors; and the lively and spirited sketches of artificial life and manners in it, will, we think, make it more entertaining to the generality of readers. It has all the fine qualities of head and heart which have so favorably recommended the former works of the fair author; the same pure style, the same elevated tone of morality, the same rare observation and exquisite tact, and the same healthful feeling and warm affections. We have placed the title of this book at the head of our article with the honest purpose of reviewing it, and not of writing an essay upon novels in general. Success-